

## CLAIMS

We claim:

1. An intelligent appliance control system comprising:

5 a data interface adapted to place an associated appliance in data communication with an associated remote user interface;

means adapted for acquiring state information from the associated appliance, which state information is representative of at least one of a current and future state of the associated appliance;

10 means adapted for communicating the state information to the data interface, whereby the state information is made available for communication to the associated user interface;

the data interface including means for acquiring state change information received from the associated remote user interface, representative of an altered, desired future state of the associated appliance;

15 means adapted for generating a state change signal representative of the desired future state of the associated appliance; and

means adapted for communicating the state change signal to the associated appliance.

20 2. The intelligent appliance control system of claim 1, wherein the data interface is adapted to communicate with the associated remote user interface via at least one of a selected Internet protocol and a web browser application.

25 3. The intelligent appliance control system of claim 1, wherein the data interface includes a processor and a memory, the processor selectively operating under a communication control program disposed in the memory to facilitate data communication with the associated remote user interface, and wherein the processor also operates under an appliance control program to facilitate control of the associated appliance in accordance with at least one of the state information and the state change information.

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4. The intelligent appliance control system of claim 1, further comprising means adapted for authenticating the associated remote user interface.

5. The intelligent appliance control system of claim 1, wherein the means adapted for generating a state change signal further comprises means adapted for selecting an operation to be performed.

6. The intelligent appliance control system of claim 5, wherein the operation to be performed is one of the group consisting of retrieving a list of available dishes, creating a new dish, modifying an existing dish, and deleting a stored dish.

7. The intelligent appliance control system of claim 1, wherein the means adapted for acquiring state information from the associated appliance further comprises a probe.

8. The intelligent appliance control system of claim 1, wherein the future state of the associated appliance is a diagnostic state.

9. The intelligent appliance control system of claim 1, wherein the state information communicated to the associated remote user interface is a status update of the associated appliance.

10. The intelligent appliance control system of claim 1, wherein communicating the state change signal to the associated appliance is accomplished using at least one of a wireless communications channel, a power-line communications channel, an Ethernet communications channel, and a Token-ring communications channel.

11. The intelligent appliance control system of claim 1 wherein at least one of the state information received from the associated appliance and the state change information received from the associated remote user interface is in the form of at least one of data associated with a verbal command, data associated with an audible command, data associated with an infrared command, and data associated with a tactile input command.

12. A method for controlling an intelligent appliance, the steps comprising:  
acquiring state information from an associated appliance, which state information  
is representative of at least one of a current and future state of the associated appliance;  
5 communicating the state information to a data interface, which data interface is in  
communication with an associated remote user interface, whereby the state information is made  
available for communication to the associated user interface;  
acquiring state change information received from the associated remote user  
interface, by the data interface, which state change information is representative of an altered,  
10 desired future state of the associated appliance;  
generating a state change signal representative of the desired future state of the  
associated appliance; and  
communicating the state change signal to the associated appliance.

15 13. The method for controlling an intelligent appliance of claim 12, wherein the data  
interface is adapted to communicate with the associated remote user interface via at least one of a  
selected Internet protocol and a web browser application.

20 14. The method for controlling an intelligent appliance of claim 12, wherein the data  
interface includes a processor and a memory, the processor selectively operating under a  
communication control program disposed in the memory to facilitate data communication with  
the associated remote user interface, and wherein the processor also operates under an appliance  
control program to facilitate control of the associated appliance in accordance with at least one of  
25 the state information and the state change information.

15. The method for controlling an intelligent appliance of claim 12, further  
comprising the step of authenticating the associated remote user interface.

16. The method for controlling an intelligent appliance of claim 12, wherein generating a state change signal further comprises the step of selecting an operation to be performed.

17. The method for controlling an intelligent appliance of claim 16, wherein the operation to be performed is one of the group consisting of retrieving a list of available dishes, creating a new dish, modifying an existing dish, and deleting a stored dish.

18. The method for controlling an intelligent appliance of claim 12, wherein acquiring state information from the associated appliance is accomplished using an Internet enabled probe.

19. The method for controlling an intelligent appliance of claim 12, wherein the future state of the associated appliance is a diagnostic state.

20. The method for controlling an intelligent appliance of claim 12, wherein the state information communicated to the associated remote user interface is a status update of the associated appliance.

21. The method for controlling an intelligent appliance of claim 12, wherein communicating the state change signal to the associated appliance is accomplished using at least one of the group consisting of a wireless communications channel, a power-line communications channel, an Ethernet communications channel, and a Token-ring communications channel.

22. The method for controlling an intelligent appliance of claim 12 wherein at least one of the state information received from the associated appliance and the state change information received from the associated remote user interface is in the form of at least one of data associated with a verbal command, data associated with an audible command, data associated with an infrared command, and data associated with a tactile input command.

23. A computer-implemented method for controlling an intelligent appliance, the steps comprising:

acquiring state information from an associated appliance, which state information is representative of at least one of a current and future state of the associated appliance;

communicating the state information to a data interface, which data interface is in communication with an associated remote user interface, whereby the state information is made available for communication to the associated user interface;

acquiring state change information received from the associated remote user interface, by the data interface, which state change information is representative of an altered, desired future state of the associated appliance;

generating a state change signal representative of the desired future state of the associated appliance; and

communicating the state change signal to the associated appliance.

24. The computer-implemented method for controlling an intelligent appliance of claim 23, wherein the data interface is adapted to communicate with the associated remote user interface via at least one of a selected Internet protocol and web browser application.

25. The computer-implemented method for controlling an intelligent appliance of claim 23 wherein the data interface includes a processor and a memory, the processor selectively operating under a communication control program disposed in the memory to facilitate data communication with the associated remote user interface, and wherein the processor also operates under an appliance control program to facilitate control of the associated appliance in accordance with at least one of the state information and the state change information.

26. The computer-implemented method for controlling an intelligent appliance of claim 23, wherein generating a state change signal further comprises the step of selecting an operation to be performed.

27. The computer-implemented method for controlling an intelligent appliance of claim 26, wherein the operation to be performed is one of the group consisting of retrieving a list of available dishes, creating a new dish, modifying an existing dish, and deleting a stored dish.

28. The computer-implemented method for controlling an intelligent appliance of claim 23, wherein acquiring state information from the associated appliance is accomplished using a probe.

29. The computer-implemented method for controlling an intelligent appliance of claim 23, wherein communicating the state change signal to the associated appliance is accomplished using at least one of the group consisting of a wireless communications channel, a power-line communications channel, an Ethernet communications channel, and a Token-ring communications channel.

30. The computer implemented method for controlling an intelligent appliance of claim 23 wherein at least one of the state information received from the associated appliance and the state change information received from the associated remote user interface is in the form of at least one of data associated with a verbal command, data associated with an audible command, data associated with an infrared command, and data associated with a tactile input command.

31. A computer-readable medium for controlling an intelligent appliance comprising:  
a data interface adapted to place an associated appliance in data communication with an associated remote user interface;

means adapted for acquiring state information from the associated appliance, which state information is representative of at least one of a current and future state of the associated appliance;

means adapted for communicating the state information to the data interface, whereby the state information is made available for communication to the associated user interface;

the data interface including means for acquiring state change information received from the associated remote user interface, representative of an altered, desired future state of the associated appliance;

means adapted for generating a state change signal representative of the desired future state of the associated appliance; and

means adapted for communicating the state change signal to the associated appliance.

32. The computer-readable medium of claim 31, wherein the data interface is adapted to communicate with the associated remote user interface via at least one of a selected Internet protocol and a web browser application.

33. The computer-readable medium of claim 31, wherein the data interface includes a processor and a memory, the processor selectively operating under a communication control program disposed in the memory to facilitate data communication with the associated remote user interface, and wherein the processor also operates under an appliance control program to facilitate control of the associated appliance in accordance with at least one of the state information and the state change information.

34. The computer-readable medium of claim 31, wherein the means adapted for generating a state change signal further comprises means adapted for selecting an operation to be performed.

35. The computer-readable medium of claim 34, wherein the operation to be performed is one of the group consisting of retrieving a list of available dishes, creating a new dish, modifying an existing dish, and deleting a stored dish.

36. The computer-readable medium of claim 31, wherein communicating the state change signal to the associated appliance is accomplished using at least one of the group consisting of a wireless communications channel, a power-line communications channel, an Ethernet communications channel, and a Token-ring communications channel.

37. The computer-readable medium of claim 31 wherein at least one of the state information received from the associated appliance and the state change information received from the associated remote user interface is in the form of at least one of data associated with a

verbal command, data associated with an audible command, data associated with an infrared command, and data associated with a tactile input command.

38. The computer-readable medium of claim 31, wherein the means adapted for  
5 acquiring state information from the associated appliance further comprises a probe.